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Unions Secure Settlement That Puts Money in CIVMARS' Pockets

Although 2020 has been a year filled with pandemic-fueled uncertainty, eligible SIU CIVMARS at least can count on compensation for restrictions to vessels.

That's the outcome of a late-September settlement secured by the SIU and two other unions. The agreement means that qualifying CIVMARS are being paid \$100 per day – retroactively to March 21, 2020 – for each day “liberty was restricted in port or at anchorage or secured mooring when liberty transportation was available.” The settlement also means CIVMARS will be paid for restrictions for the foreseeable future (while the Military Sealift Command's “gangways up” order remains place).

SIU Vice President Government Services Kate Hunt, along with officials from the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA) and the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots (MM&P), said in an October email to crews which included a copy of the settlement, “We sincerely believe that we favorably settled the primary

focus of our grievance: COMSC-directed, CIVMAR-only shipboard liberty restrictions effected arbitrarily and capriciously which left CIVMARS disparately impacted. Considering the current anti-union/anti-federal worker administration in place at this time, we chose not to risk losing this grievance before an arbitrator which would have forever precluded us from grieving any shipboard liberty restriction with such an unfavorable precedent.”

They added, “In addition to securing guaranteed payment retroactively and for future restrictions in accordance with the terms of this MOU, we maintained the existing terms of CMPI 630 and our negotiated MOUs governing liberty restrictions; which management attempted to modify which would have undoubtedly harmed your interests.”

In communications to Hunt, SIU members expressed support for the settlement.

“The CIVMARS on the *Frank Cable* give you a big THANK YOU!” wrote YNSK Casey A. Beckford.

“I am in agreement with you when it comes to payment of gangway-up,” said AB Delores Franklin.

“The offer that MSC has agreed to is fair,” said mariner Roger Felton. “I would take the settlement.”

“Thank you and the union for everything,” stated Seafarer Joseph R. Guthrie. “I am appreciative of all the hard work the union does to help CIVMARS. The \$100-a-day settlement is fair.”

Member Matt Trow, who'd been restricted to the *Fall River*, said he'd “had a sinking feeling we were all going to get [mistreated] and not get a penny. Thank you so much for all your hard work. We really do appreciate you.”

Steven Elliott, a CIVMAR from the *USNS Pecos*, wrote, “Thank you for all of your efforts. This is why I'm a union member, and I also come from a union family. The \$100 a day can help me tremendously.”

As reported earlier this year, the unions in April filed a grievance to formally protest the manner in which

federal mariners have been restricted to their respective vessels during the pandemic. At that time, Hunt stated, “Our members have made many sacrifices because of their role as essential workers. They deserve fair treatment, and the union will do everything possible to ensure it.”

Since the settlement was reached, the SIU, along with the MEBA and the MMP, have been working with MSC to ensure prompt payment of all monies owed to CIVMARS under the terms of the agreement. On Nov. 4, 2020, MSC issued a human-resources advisory to all ships providing guidance on the proper procedures for submitting liberty restriction payment requests beginning Oct. 1, 2020. Correctly calculating the retroactive payments back to March 21, 2020, is a more complicated project. MSC assures the SIU that the accounting work is ongoing. The SIU is monitoring this effort closely and will keep the membership informed of all progress.

SIU-Backed Candidates Fare Well on Election Day

While there were still a number of races too close to call at press time, the SIU's political department has completed its review of the preliminary results of Election 2020. As always, until these races are certified by their respective state governments, these are preliminary results only.

Unlike most federal political action committees, the Seafarers Political Activities Donation – SPAD, the union's voluntary fund – is bipartisan, and the union contributes to incumbents, challengers and candidates running in open seat races.

As of press time, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are the presumptive winners for the White House. The Electoral College votes on Dec. 14 to confirm the final results.

Additionally, SPAD participated in 153 House of Representatives races around the country. Of those races, the SIU-backed candidate won in 144, lost in two, with seven races too close to call. That's a win percentage of 93.46%.

SPAD participated in 13 Senate races around the country. Of those races, the SIU-backed candidate won in every

single race. That's a win percentage of 100%.

SPAD supports candidates of both parties and also supports challenger and open seat candidates as well.

In a letter to SIU President Michael Sacco earlier this year, former Vice President Biden wrote in part, “As a lifelong advocate for working families and unions, I write to assure you of my strong and unwavering support for the Seafarers International Union, its members, and the U.S.-flag Merchant Marine fleet. Labor unions built the middle class and the

middle class built this country. The basic building blocks of a good life – middle-class jobs at union wages, a 40-hour work week, health insurance, retirement benefits, a voice in the workplace – resulted from workers who organized unions and fought for worker protections. This is the history of the Seafarers International Union. And at a time when our country is facing unprecedented challenges, our economic future today depends on unions like yours – just as it did in the past.

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CIVMAR-Crewed USNS Yukon Conducts Arabian Sea Rescue

The *USNS Yukon* may have made history on Aug. 7 by performing a rescue in the Arabian Sea.

While there's nothing new about American-flag ships aiding fellow mariners, this particular operation included a component unique to 2020: social distancing.

The *Yukon's* crew includes members of the SIU Government Services Division.

According to news reports, the *Yukon* received notification that the dhow *Wadi Karan* was adrift and required assistance. The *Wadi Karan* had experienced engine failure 10 days earlier, and the crew had run out of food and water.

After assessing the situation, the *Yukon's* crew provided them with food and

water, and they remained on station until naval forces from nearby Oman arrived to provide further assistance. Throughout the rescue, the *Yukon's* crew maintained social distancing, including following face covering requirements, in order to prevent the possible transmission of COVID-19 between the two crews.

“The duty to help each other when in need is something that all mariners share, civilian and military alike,” said Navy Capt. Michael O'Driscoll, commander of Task Force 53, to which the *Yukon* is assigned. “The sailors and civilian mariners aboard MSC ships are trained and ready to answer this call whenever possible.”



Sailors aboard a rigid hull inflatable boat assigned to the *USNS Yukon* transit from the distressed motor vessel *Wadi Karan* after rendering assistance in the Arabian Sea. (Photo courtesy U.S. Navy)

President's Column

Bright Future for Maritime

With Election Day finally behind us, I'm looking forward to fully refocusing on the never-ending effort to promote and expand the U.S. Merchant Marine. Regardless of how the presidential election would have turned out, I was confident that our industry has a very real opportunity to grow, including through the creation of a new Tanker Security Program. That's something we've worked on for a while, and it needs to come to fruition in the next Congress – for the benefit of U.S. national, economic and homeland security.



Michael Sacco

Some of you may know that President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris are longtime friends of the SIU and unwavering backers of the Jones Act. They really know our industry and they'll be allies when it comes to protecting workers' rights, too.

We have a lot of friends in the outgoing administration as well, and if that seems odd or unlikely in any way, remember that maritime is a historically bipartisan issue. We've always had friends from both major political parties, and we'll always work with anyone and everyone who's willing to stand up for the U.S. Merchant Marine and for America's working families.

Regardless of how you voted and for whom, I hope you share my encouragement at the record turnout across our great nation. This happened despite a pandemic that's unprecedented in modern times.

Pre- and post-election polls also showed widespread support for workers' rights and for an economy that boosts the middle class. This is firmly in line with our union's work since our founding in 1938.

Additionally, and as reported elsewhere in this edition, the SIU had great interest in many elections, not just the race for the White House. And I'm happy to report that the vast majority of candidates we supported, came out on top. Again, these were candidates from both parties. We support those who support maritime, period.

I'm not blind to the wide range of emotions that accompanied Election Day and the sometimes-agonizing moments that followed into the weekend. Just remember that we all love our country and we'll all be better off by finding common ground, working together and treating each other respectfully.

As Seafarers do every day when they've signed aboard a vessel, let's move forward together as one crew in 2021.

Happy Holidays

While we all are still dealing with the global pandemic, I'm hopeful that everyone throughout the SIU will be able to count our blessings during the winter holidays.

One thing I'm very grateful for is the incredible professionalism of Seafarers in 2020. You have truly risen to the occasion and fulfilled your mission as essential workers. You have demonstrated flexibility, dedication and sacrifice in order to help keep commerce flowing and to support our armed forces. You certainly answered the call during the turbo activations this summer, and I'm proud of you.

This dedication extends to our affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland, which reopened in early August. Everyone at the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education has met the moment and done what needs to be done in order to safely, successfully run classes for upgraders and apprentices. It's not easy but it's vital, and everyone at the school – staff and students alike – deserves credit for getting the job done.

Keep the faith, brothers and sisters. Better days are ahead.

SIU Directory

Michael Sacco, President

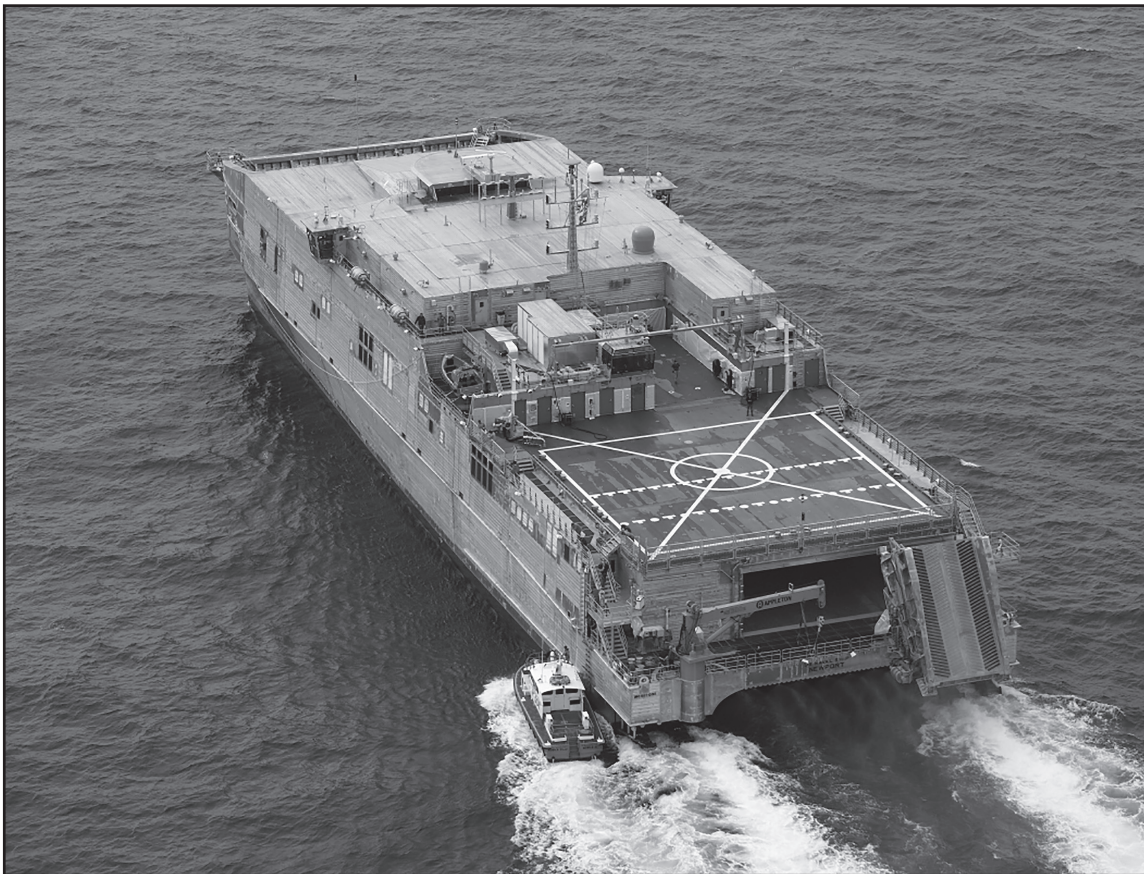
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David Heindel, Secretary-Treasurer

George Tricker, Vice President Contracts

**Kate Hunt,
Vice President Government Services**

**Joe Vincenzo,
Asst. Vice President Government Services**



The U.S. Navy recently accepted delivery of its newest expeditionary fast transport vessel, the *USNS Newport*. The ship, pictured in Mobile, Alabama, will be crewed by CIVMARS from the SIU Government Services Division. (Photo courtesy Austal USA)

EPF USNS Newport Joins CIVMAR Fleet

New jobs for CIVMARS from the SIU Government Services Division are on the way following the Sept. 2 delivery of the U.S. Navy's newest expeditionary fast transport (EPF) vessel, the *USNS Newport*. The 338-foot ship successfully completed integrated sea trials on July 30.

According to the Navy, "Integrated trials combine builder's and acceptance trials, allowing for the shipyard to demonstrate to the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey the operational capability and mission readiness of all the ship's systems during a single underway period. During trials, the shipbuilder conducted comprehensive tests to demonstrate the performance of all of the ship's major systems. The *USNS Newport* is the second EPF ship to undergo the integrated trial, signifying the stability and maturity of the shipbuilding program."

"Achieving this milestone is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the shipbuilding team and our partners in industry," said Tim Roberts, Strategic and Theater Sealift program manager for the Navy. "We are eager to ... enhance the operational flexibility available to our combatant commanders."

EPFs are designed to operate in shallow waterways and are capable of a wide range of activities. They can transport 600 short tons 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots, and include a flight deck to support aircraft operations. The ships are capable of interfacing with roll-on/roll-off facilities, as well as on/off-loading militarily useful vehicles up to and including a fully combat-loaded Abrams Main Battle Tank.

Austal USA, the shipyard, has also started construction of the future *USNS Apalachicola* and is under contract to build the future *USNS Cody*.

Voting Continues in SIU's 2020 Election

Voting started Nov. 1 and will continue through Dec. 31 in the election of officers of the SIU's Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters.

Balloting is taking place at 20 SIU halls across the country. Full-book SIU members in good standing are eligible to vote in the election, which will determine union officers for the 2021-2024 term.

Seafarers may obtain their ballots from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays (except legal holidays), and from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays (again except legal holidays) until Dec. 31.

The ballot includes the list of candidates seeking the posts of president, executive vice president, secretary-treasurer, six vice presidents, six assistant vice presidents and 10 port agents (for a total of 25 positions). Only two of the positions have more than one candidate running; those positions are highlighted on the ballot.

At the union halls, a member in good standing (upon presenting his or her book) is given a ballot and two envelopes. After his or her selection is marked, the ballot is folded and placed inside an envelope marked "ballot." That envelope then is sealed inside a postage-paid envelope bearing the mailing address of the bank depository where ballots are kept until submitted to the union tallying committee.

The rank-and-file tallying committee, consisting of two members from each of the union's constitutional ports, will be elected in December. They will convene in early January and will tabulate and announce the election results.

Article XIII of the union's constitution spells out the procedures by which an election will be conducted. The entire text of Article XIII, along with a sample ballot, a list of voting locations and other related information appears on Pages 6-10 of the October 2020 issue of the *Seafarers LOG*.

Additionally, a notice of the election was mailed in October to all members at their last known address, with a list of all voting locations as well as a sample of the official ballot.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, extra steps are being taken to help ensure member participation in the election. These modifications have been extensively reported in the *Seafarers LOG*, on the SIU website and at the monthly membership meetings. They include (for this election only) easing the absentee-ballot procedures, expanding the hours for ballot pickup, and having union representatives bring ballots to SIU-crewed vessels whenever reasonably possible. As part of the latter development, SIU representatives are undergoing COVID-19 testing every two weeks, and any representative visiting a ship must show proof of a recent negative test.

Gov’t Expert Calls for Stronger U.S.-Flag Sealift

The Lexington Institute generally wants government to butt out, but when it comes to U.S.-flag sealift capacity, the stakes are too high for inaction.

That was one conclusion among several penned by Lexington Institute Chief Operating Officer Loren Thompson in a recent article for *Forbes*. Thompson examined a new Defense Department plan for remaking the U.S. Navy and stated that while much of the Battle Force 2045 strategy likely won’t come to fruition, “there are some elements within the plan that do not require heavy lifting to accomplish, because their cost is modest and bipartisan support already exists. Sealift – the capacity to move U.S. military supplies to foreign conflicts expeditiously – is one such element.”

Thompson said he anticipates limits on future Defense spending because of a “fiscal hangover” from the COVID-19 pandemic. He also stated that Defense Secretary Mark Esper’s plan “is so imposing – nearly a dozen new ship classes, half of them unmanned – that it would be challenging to implement even in normal times.”

Throwing more support behind civilian-crewed military support ships is very achievable, however, according to Thompson.

“The nation’s sealift fleet, which would carry 90% of supplies in wartime, has been decaying for decades,” he wrote. “That partly reflects the low priority assigned to the mission, and partly reflects the decline of the U.S. commercial shipping industry. With fewer than 200 U.S.-flagged vessels engaged in international commerce, there just isn’t much slack in the system if U.S. forces need to be surged overseas in an emergency.

“The Navy’s current assets consist of 15 prepositioned supply ships anchored overseas near potential trouble spots, plus an additional 15 ‘surge’ vessels maintained in a reduced state of readiness,” he continued. “These ships are operated by commercial companies under the supervision of the Military Sealift Command, and are designed so that military vehicles and supplies can be driven directly into cargo holds rather than needing to be lifted or broken down.”

But that only offers approximately half of the capacity needed “to lift the Army and other services to a major war,” Thompson explained. “To secure the remainder, [the armed forces] must turn to the Transportation Department, specifically the Ready Reserve Fleet (RRF) maintained by the Maritime Administration, and to the private merchant marine.”

Thompson then explained the mission and condition of the RRF (which contains 46 former commercial ships) as well as the 60 privately owned, civilian-crewed vessels in the U.S. Maritime Security Program.

“There are all sorts of problems with mobilizing this diverse menagerie of vessels,” Thompson said. “The entire sealift fleet is aging and its availability will become increasingly problematic in future years. This challenge has been recognized for years, and explains why Secretary Esper explicitly cited the need to modernize sealift assets in his October 6 discussion of Battle Force 2045.

“The problem with Esper’s broader vision is that it requires so much money for so many initiatives that sealift would have to fight every year for funding against missions that have stronger constituencies,” Thompson continued. “However, viewed in isolation it is not a particularly expensive activity. The Congressional Budget Office estimated in 2019 that it would only cost a little over \$1 billion per year going forward to recapitalize and operate the sealift fleet. That represents 2-3 hours of federal spending at current rates. So, whatever the fate of Battle Force 2045, sealift is an eminently fixable challenge. The Navy’s three-pronged approach, disclosed in 2018, is to extend the service life of the most modern vessels in the Ready Reserve Fleet, buy second-hand foreign commercial ships for modification, and build a new class of auxiliary vessels in domestic shipyards.”

The latter undertaking, named the Common Hull Auxiliary Multi-Mission Platform (CHAMP), “would provide both new sealift and various other support vessels the fleet requires, but the initiative was rebuffed by the White House Budget Office in preparing the 2021 budget submission due to high per-vessel costs,” Thompson said.

“Congress has already begun funding the life-extensions of the Ready Reserve Fleet and purchase of used foreign ships. The Navy is not ready to give up on CHAMP, because it meets multiple service requirements and would produce sealift assets superior to what can be obtained by the other two parts of its strategy. The service probably will prevail in the end, because there is bipartisan support on Capitol Hill for building new sealift vessels to commercial specifications in the nation’s shipyards.”

He concluded, “The unanswered question is whether the sealift mission can stay afloat now that Secretary Esper has called into question virtually every facet of the Navy’s long-term shipbuilding plan. The political landscape is in such disarray that congressional champions will have to protect sealift from becoming a bill-payer for bigger, more visible missions. Time will tell whether those champions come forward. However, there is a bottom line to the sealift story that military planners would do well to heed: If you can’t get to the fight on time, then you are probably going to lose the war.”

Thompson was deputy director of the Securities Studies Program at Georgetown University. He has taught at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and holds doctoral and master’s degrees in government from Georgetown.

The Lexington Institute is a non-profit entity whose mission statement in part says that the organization “believes in limiting the role of the federal government to those functions explicitly stated or implicitly defined by the Constitution. The Institute therefore actively opposes the unnecessary intrusion of the federal government into the commerce and culture of the nation, and strives to find nongovernmental, market-based solutions to public-policy challenges. We believe a dynamic private sector is the greatest engine for social progress and economic prosperity.... By promoting America’s ability to project power around the globe we not only defend the homeland of democracy, but also sustain the international stability in which other free-market democracies can thrive.”

CIVMARS At Work

Both of these vessels (pictured Oct. 12 in the Atlantic Ocean) are crewed by CIVMARS from the SIU Government Services Division. The fast combat support ship *USNS Supply* (right) conducts a replenishment-at-sea with the hospital ship *USNS Comfort*. The *Comfort* is on an 11-week medical support mission to Central and South America as part of U.S. Southern Command’s Enduring Promise initiative. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Devin Alexandra Lowe)



How to Become an SIU Member

Joining the SIU is easy and an important step in protecting your workplace rights. The union’s website – www.seafarers.org – includes printable PDF versions of forms that mariners may use to request and authorize payroll deductions for labor organization dues. The forms are posted at:

<https://www.seafarers.org/news/labor-maritime-news/civmar-news/>

Forms are also available under “SIU Forms” in the ABOUT tab.

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Many Pro-Maritime Candidates Elected

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“Just as unions are essential to the middle class, the U.S.-flag Merchant Marine fleet and the men and women who operate U.S.-flag ships are crucial to America’s national security, our international trade relationships, and economic development,” Biden continued. “For this reason, I have been a consistent and strong advocate for the Jones Act and its mandate that only U.S.-flag vessels carry cargo in the coastwise trade. As President, I will continue my strong support for the Jones Act.”

He added his ongoing support for cargo preference laws, the United States Maritime Security Program, and the United States Export-Import Bank, all of which help maintain jobs for U.S. mariners aboard American-flag vessels.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, during an on-line speech that took place Nov. 5, said the union vote made a big difference on Election Day. “Joe Biden’s path to the White House ran through America’s labor movement,” Trumka stated. “Initial topline from our post-election survey show union members went 58 per-

cent for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. While the general public supported Biden by three points, our members favored him by 21 points.

Simply put, we got out the vote. In Wisconsin. In Michigan. In Pennsylvania. Joe Biden’s firewall was union made!”

He added, “The labor movement is expanding the map. Look at Arizona. Look at Georgia.”

Trumka concluded, “There will be work to do over these next few days, and no shortage of work over the next four years. While we don’t know the final composition of the Senate, we know our priorities. Our members made it clear. Some 95 percent say that protecting workers’ rights is the top priority for this next congress. And yes, that includes 93 percent of our members who went for Trump. The right to collective bargaining. Fair wages and workplace safety. A voice on the job. The belief that all work has dignity and everyone should retire with security. None of that is red or blue. It’s simply American. It’s what America’s labor movement has fought for in 2020 – not just in this election but in our workplaces, too.... None of this will be easy, but union members are not afraid of hard work. We do it every day and we see the job through.”

SIU Pitches in With ‘BookWaves’ Outreach

American Federation of Teachers Spearheads Philanthropic Project to Provide Student Assistance

A coalition including the SIU, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), SIU-contracted Crowley, Matson and TOTE (respectively), non-profit organizations and other groups has teamed up to eventually deliver more than 100,000 free books to students in Puerto Rico, Guam and Alaska.

The AFT, the Transportation Institute (TI) (representing U.S.-flag vessel operators) and the organization First Book in particular spearheaded the launch of the outreach known as BookWaves. Together, all participants are uniting to assist students and families during the COVID-19 crisis.

TI Chairman and President Jim Henry said, “Reading books to children helps stimulate their imagination and expands their ability to understand the world, and that’s why the Transportation Institute – with its maritime members Crowley and TOTE – are dedicated and proud to work with teachers to donate and ship thousands of books to young students to help make our future stronger.”

AFT President Randi Weingarten said, “We’re doing our part to help students and their families – regardless of their geography or demography – have what they need to learn. Our hope is that BookWaves will provide books to help them navigate this difficult time and prioritize one of the most fundamental things we can all do together: read.”

BookWaves is supported by SIU-contracted operators Crowley, Matson, and TOTE, as well as trucking company Convoy and other local air and ground transportation companies that have donated their expertise and services to ship tens of thousands of books across land and sea to remote communities in need of books. The AFT, TI and Pi Beta Phi Foundation provided financial support to secure books from First Book; while the AFT and the SIU helped with title selection and providing on-the-ground coordination of sorting and distribution.

At press time, the first wave of 3,000 bilingual and Spanish STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) books have been distributed, at a socially distant outdoor event at the Manuel A. Perez Residencial in San Juan, with more distributions to follow in the late fall and winter across Alaska, Guam and Puerto Rico.

“Hearing of the hard work the AFT and First Book have been doing over the years to bring millions of books to students in need inspired our organization to marshal the resources of the U.S.-flag maritime industry and our logistics partners to help Americans in far-flung communities that rely on our shipping services have better access to books and inspire a lifelong love of reading and learning,” said Rich Berkowitz, the Transportation Institute’s vice president of Pacific Coast Operations.



With containers of books in the foreground, volunteers team up in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Crowley donated the shipping of 3,000 STEM books in Spanish, bilingual and English titles and is committed to shipping another 30,000 books to Puerto Rico. The Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico is spearheading the effort to distribute books, as well as partnering with the SIU to create maritime collections in high schools to support career and technical education.

“This is a great initiative, which truly will have a positive impact for the students. A book in the hands of a child or young person is an opportunity for the development of language, comprehension, reading and their upbringing as a human being,” said Elba L. Aponte Santos, president of the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico. “We are grateful for this collaboration to bring high-quality books, which are so important for students and teachers of Puerto Rico.”

“Working in partnership with the Transportation Institute, including Crowley and TOTE, as well as the teachers of our young students in Puerto Rico, we will create a pathway of knowledge that enables these students to learn, grow and seek out the career ladders that are offered in the maritime industry and other opportunities,” said SIU Port Agent Amancio Crespo.

“Bringing more than 100,000 free books to students and families in need is never easy, but doing it during a worldwide pandemic is almost impossible,” said AFT Executive Vice President Evelyn DeJesus. “We never could have gotten these books to kids without the generosity, tenacity and collaborative ‘can-do’ spirit of the U.S.-flagged shipping companies Crowley, Matson and TOTE as well as the Seafarers International Union members. Thank you so much for the essential work you do – day in, day out – to provide a stable and vital lifeline of resources to American communities and families.”

In Guam, more than 40,000 books have been delivered from the East Coast by Convoy and then shipped across the Pacific Ocean by Matson Navigation. Volunteers from the Guam Federation of Teachers (GFT) and SIU will distribute the books to pre-K through 12th-grade public school students and families as soon as island lockdown restrictions are relaxed.

“Our members are so excited to have so many and such great books to provide to our students,” said GFT President Tim Fedenko. “We are eager to start handing out books as soon as possible to support student achievement and to help build the sense of community that can be hard to create while doing remote learning.”

“Crowley is proud and honored to support the education of children on the island through the donated transportation of 33,000 books as part of the BookWaves coalition initiative,” said Crowley Logistics Vice President, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, Salvador Menoyo. “As the longest-serving U.S. shipping line serving Puerto Rico, Crowley’s team is dedicated to

serving our friends and neighbors on the island. Supporting Puerto Rico’s youths is a natural part of our unending commitment.”

TOTE Puerto Rico General Manager and Vice President of Caribbean Services Eduardo Pagan said, “While COVID-19 has changed our world and deeply impacted the education system, today’s delivery tens of thousands of books by First Book, AMPR, the Transportation Institute and many others demonstrates that our entire community – on and off the island – is dedicated to providing students in Puerto Rico the tools and resources they need to advance their education. This donation is the first of many to come and TOTE is proud to be a partner in this initiative that will help shape the future for Puerto Rico’s young people and create a positive and lasting impact in our communities.”

As the coalition focuses on remote and rural communities in Alaska, nearly 40,000 books were slated for delivery in November with an emphasis on STEM and books with Indigenous characters, including “Molly of Denali,” based on the popular PBS animated show.

BookWaves is working with Alaska Marine Lines, Alaska Communications, Northern Air Cargo, Ryanair, TOTE, AFT affiliates in Alaska, and Alaskan Indigenous organizations to deliver books to as many rural and remote communities as possible. According to Berkowitz, “The broader effort led to a special partnership between the Alaska fishing philanthropic organization AFIRM and Western Alaskan Community Development Quota Program villages to provide access to books for their local youth. Kids from Atka to Naknek to Diomedes will have an opportunity to select their own high-quality books.”

Along with the books, the AFT is providing bookplates for kids to write their names inside their books to give them a sense of ownership and pride. In Puerto Rico, materials are in Spanish and English; in Guam, bilingual English-Chamorro bookmarks include reading tips for parents on how to help their children become strong readers; and blank journals will be provided for students in Alaska, Guam and Puerto Rico so students have an opportunity to express themselves and write their own stories.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated an existing crisis in education, especially for children in poverty. We cannot allow them to slide further behind while they are isolated without books and educational resources – essentially locked out of learning,” said Kyle Zimmer, president, CEO and co-founder of First Book. “We are so grateful that the BookWaves coalition understands the gravity of this problem and is working with us to help the kids in greatest need. This innovative collaboration is helping to engage some of our country’s most vulnerable children at a time when they need that support the most.”

BUFFET de libros

DÍA:
28 DE OCTUBRE
DE 2020

HORA:
1:00 P.M.

LUGAR: CANCHA DE BALONCESTO DE 381
RESIDENCIAL MANUEL A. PEREZ

AUSPICIADO POR

A promotional flyer